

Seasonal Influenza Vaccine Update

Some health care providers in Arizona have noticed delays in receiving seasonal influenza vaccines. Others have been told that certain manufacturers will not be able to fill existing orders. This has resulted in some providers having to delay or cancel scheduled seasonal influenza clinics.

Projections of the supply of seasonal influenza vaccine in the US this year are about 114-115 million doses. This is more than has ever been distributed in the US. The previous maximum number of doses distributed in a single year in the US was 113 million that were distributed in the 2008-2009 season.

Therefore, the seasonal influenza vaccine supply is still close to previous projections. As of the middle of September, 54 million doses of seasonal influenza vaccine had been distributed in the US, approximately one half of the expected supply.

There are several reasons why seasonal influenza vaccine may be more difficult to purchase this season:

- More providers may be ordering influenza vaccine this year in light of the media coverage associated with 2009 H1N1 influenza infections.
- Providers may be trying to complete seasonal influenza vaccination in advance of 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccination efforts.
- One of the manufacturers adjusted down their seasonal influenza vaccine estimates by 1.5 million and had to cancel orders.
- Manufacturers are also producing 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine which makes it more difficult for them to adjust to unanticipated demand in seasonal influenza.

Any current delay in receiving seasonal influenza vaccine does not put a patient at immediate risk for seasonal influenza infection since seasonal influenza does not usually start circulating until December or January.

As in past seasons, the availability of seasonal influenza vaccine may change as the season progresses, depending on the demand for seasonal influenza vaccine and any unforeseen change in the expected supply. Providers can use the Influenza Vaccine Availability Tracking System to help determine which wholesale distributors or manufacturers have seasonal influenza vaccine in stock for sale or on order http://www.preventinfluenza.org/ivats/default_new.asp

The best protection against seasonal influenza is a yearly influenza vaccine. People who are at higher risk for complications from influenza infection include pregnant women, children under 18 years old, all adults 50 years and older, residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities, and young adults with chronic medical conditions (including asthma, diabetes, heart disease, kidney

disease, liver disease, lung disease, neurologic and neuromuscular disease, hematologic disease, and immunosuppression)

Other people who should receive seasonal influenza vaccination include health care workers, and household contacts and caregivers of people at high risk with particular emphasis on vaccinating contacts of children less than 6 months old. Influenza vaccination should continue throughout the fall and winter since seasonal influenza often starts to appear as early as November and usually circulates until April, and 2009 H1N1 influenza is currently actively circulating.

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